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THE HIGHLY EDUCATED MIGRATORY BIRDS OF TURKEY

*(Research article)*

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the sense of brain drain for overseas-trained YLSY scholars who renounced their scholarship settling abroad and the pushing-pulling factors in this decision. The research was conveyed in the phenomenological design and interviews with 3 female and 7 male YLSY scholars from the U.S., the U.K, Canada and Germany were conducted via snowball sampling. The interview questions prepaid were examined by three field experts. One-to-one online semi-structured interviews taking an average of 40-50 minutes were made over Zoom. The data was analyzed employing content analysis and four themes were reached as *journey to opportunities, coefficient repellents and incentives, an effort not to lose what is achieved* and *suggestions* to policy makers. The participants defined brain drain as a long journey that led to opportunities, and social reasons as well as academic reasons were dominant in this migration.

*Keywords:* Brain drain, YLSY, migration, phenomenology, pushing and pulling factors

1. Introduction

Globalization in education paves way to international migration and includes educational opportunities and innovations in one country to reach another one and particularly from developed to developing or underdeveloped countries. In the context of global education, student exchange programs take big place resulting in striking benefits such as having education in foreign countries, taking the advantages of technological and scientific innovations, sharing cultural elements and using the same language as a medium of instruction. While education is getting international and standard (Güngör, 2009), it poses some threatening impacts in terms of countries’ loss of highly educated people, which is called brain drain.

Brain drain started in the world as an action of students whose aims are to obtain qualified education in industrialized countries and stay there to work (Bartram, Poros & Monforte, 2014). Students are attracted by enticements, scholarships (Kattel & Saptoka, 2018) and migrate in search of high standards in education and life as well as improved professional opportunities. However, from the standpoint of the country which sends students abroad, it is the loss of trained and highly educated people (Johnson, 1965). Being a global phenomenon, this problem helps developed countries to get benefits, whereas the least developed countries lose their educated and skilled students seen as a hope for the development of the nation (Kattel & Sapkota, 2018). Educated brainpower is seen as the biggest capital in the 21st century and thus is a serious investment to produce, develop and go further. Industrialized and modern countries allocate big shares of their budgets in education and this brings out the brain drain movements which have gained a great momentum over the years (Yılmaz, 2019).

According to OECD indicator on ‘What is the Profile of Internationally Mobile Students?’ (2019), the number of students internationally mobile increased by 2 % between the years 2010 and 2017. The largest group of international mobile students of the whole is from Asia to OECD with 56% and other partner countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany and the Russian Federation. In this context, the number of students and highly qualified educated people transmigrated to one another country has reached 5.3 million in 2017. In Turkey 330.289 people migrated to other countries in 2019 and 13.3 % of them were aged between 25-29 which means that these people are generally university graduates and highly educated people (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2020). The Scientific and Technological Research Council in Turkey (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu [TUBITAK]) started implementing some projects to convince these immigrants to return in 2010. The institution has spent 6.1 million TL just for 258 of academics who returned thanks to this project in 2018 (TUBITAK, 2020).

The push factors of developing countries losing their highly educated students and the pull factors of developed countries regarding brain drain have been attractive topics to search for economics, politics, social and educational disciplines. Its relationship with economic growth (Beine, Docquier & Rapoport, 2001; Johnson, 1965; Bakırtaş & Kandemir, 2010; Sağbaş 2009), the push and pull factors of nurse migration (Kline, 2003) and the study on agriculture and veterinary students migrating from Nepal (Kattel & Saptoka, 2018) are just examples of many. In political context, the push and pull factors for migration of Caribbean and Jamaican people handled by Parkins (2010) and similarly Kramer (2009) focused on the political implications and surveyed the relationship between international students and U.S. global power in the 21st century. Numerous researches have been carried out to find its effects on politics (Arslan, 2018) and social framework (Babataş, 2007).

Likewise, this topic has attracted many researchers in educational and social disciplines and generally these two dimensions are integrated into each other. Emigration of Singaporean students was taken as an investigation issue by Ziguras and Gribble (2015) whereas McGill (2018) focused on the social side of the migration and of international graduates’ intentions, outcomes and implications in this context. Muthanna (2015) took brain drain from Yemen as research case while Yang (2020) took Chinese and Nghia (2019) took Vietnamese cases in this respect and searched for the educational implications of brain drain problem particularly. In Turkey, educational dimension has been a fundamental and ongoing topic recently as young university graduates considered as human capital are provided a scholarship named Selecting and Appointing the Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education (Yurtdışına Lisansüstü Öğrenim Görmek Üzere Gönderilecek Öğrencileri Seçme ve Yerleştirme [hereafter called YLSY]), sponsored by The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and Council of Higher Education (CoHE). While the expectation is that they become a qualified academic and return back to their home country, due to some push and pull factors some of them do not return to the country and investments made for them cannot find a return.

Even though there have been many studies on brain drain and scholarship programs in literature, the studies focusing on YLSY scholarship program and its problems are limited. Erden (2013) made an assessment of this scholarship program to determine the students’ cultural, political, economic and educational perceptions and tried to find out the reasons behind these changes. Kulaç (2016) analyzed the abroad graduate scholarship policy of Turkey and searched for the attitudes of former and present students abroad towards the program. Mercan (2016) explained the national laws binding for academics and the YLSY students in Turkey trying to throw light on the students’ decision process before application. Karakaş (2020) focused on the educational values and practices of the students who completed their education abroad and now working in universities as academics. In their study, Aktekin and Karataş (2019), identified YLSY students’ personal, academic, linguistic, cultural and institutional problems and proposed solutions to them. In the context of the studies aforementioned, it is seen that there is a limited number of studies highlighting the problem why many YLSY students do not return to Turkey after they graduated from the universities. This study aims to find out the pull and push factors causing the students’ desires to stay abroad and not coming back to Turkey. It is expected that suggestions made related to the findings of the study will benefit the policymakers, academics and YLSY students. With the help of these suggestions, policymakers can see the reasons of this problem from the standpoint of students, which can ease finding solutions.

1.1. Migration

As old as humanity, migration has become a part of existence and legend indicates that because of some disputes mythical governing forces of the time, even mythical men and supernatural beings including Adam, Prometheus and Daedalus were forced to migrate. Besides it is well known that Plato has tempted many promising islanders and scientist to go to Athens. Since the ancient times migration is defined as moving away from the usual residence place to another place in the same country or abroad due to social, economic, political or natural reasons (Mejia, Pizurki & Royston, 1979). Clark (2020) mentions three types of migration related to spatial changes as move within the city, across regions and cross nations. He asserts that as the distance is not so many cities an internal migration just impacts the social life and occupation. Migration to another city in the same country also disrupts the social life requiring to meet new people, establishing new contacts and maybe finding a new job. When the movement is towards another country, the migrants not only change their jobs or social contacts, but they are to learn new cultures as well. The consequences of migration have many impacts on both the location left and the location moved to. However, generally the positive impacts are thought to be on the host places and the detrimental impacts on the donor places.

Fundamentally, no matter if it is internal or external migration is a geographical phenomenon and a common experience in human history that goes back thousands of years. While internal one is much more common, external migration with its more significant consequences takes more attention of researchers as emigration to another country is more difficult and distressing (Bartram et al, 2014). These internal or external migrations may be voluntary (for better jobs, marriage or better education and health services), obligatory (due to natural disasters, wars etc.) or forced (due to wars or political issues) (Adıgüzel, 2020; Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 2014). Boyle et al. (2014) stresses the point that migration, made up of a complex process, generally does not occur for only one reason; even if some of them may not seem obvious there are many factors embedded in this decision.

Whatever the reason is, it is a fact that migration affects both the host country and the one left because migrants not only change the place they live but they reform their individual and social relations and take their experience, life styles, cultures, expectations with them as well (Sağbaş, 2009). Such big decisions may include some risks and thus it is not easy to decide on it, so in order to take this decision there have to be some factors pushing them away from their own country and some pulling factors of the new host country they intend to move (Adıgüzel, 2020).

In his migration theory Lee (1966) deals with four factors which are effective in deciding migration and starting it. These are factors related to the home country, factors related to new host country, interfering obstacles and individual factors. He mentions that both in home and host countries there are some positive and negative factors either holding people within the area and attract or repel them. There are also other factors which are described as the ones which people are indifferent to. These pushing and pulling factors’ effects depend on the individuals and the reason behind migration may be economic, social, cultural, familial, etc. When people decide to migrate they encounter with some obstacles such as distance or some kind of difficulties or dangers in this journey. Lastly, there are some individual factors which affect this process even if they are not seen actual factors such as personal sensitivities, being aware of the opportunities abroad, intelligence, personal contacts or decisions related to not the migrants themselves but their family etc.

The pushing factors of home countries are generally asserted as low income, restricted or no job opportunities for their educational background, the need to get rid of the restrictive family bonds, the political instability of the home country. The pulling factors of the host countries are also seen as higher income opportunities, getting promotion based on their success and skills rather than the length of service, to be able to work in a free environment, and getting married to a host country citizen (Atılgan, 1986).

1.2. Brain Drain

Economists have been aware of the important role of human beings’ productive capacity both in countries’ income and people themselves. With the help of this productivity, people select best options available for themselves. Regarding this, investments are made on people seen as human capital with the expectation of a return after some time. Even though this expectation does not cover all kinds of investment in human beings, investments on their education and training are taken for this kind (Schultz, 1961). Education has both immediate and future benefits for creating earnings with highly educated, skilled and productive workers. That is to say, investing in education has prospective impacts on the future of the human beings themselves in micro levels and their nations in macro levels (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). For every country in the development process, educated and skilled workforce is a valuable asset and in order to integrate into the global economy and be aware of global innovations, huge numbers of students and eligible individuals go to universities abroad for higher education. As a result of the significant increase in international mobility of these students, staying in the country where they study after graduation has turned into a trend which poses a risk of brain drain influencing the development, advancement and educational quality of home country (Odhiambo, 2013).

Brain drain is defined as the cross-border movement of a highly educated, highly specialized and highly skilled workforce in order to attain greater incentives in their field of expertise and perhaps to have higher living standards and lifestyle (Pazarcık, 2010). Brain drain has become a prevailing pattern of cross-border migration trend and a significant part of globalization (Beine et al., 2001) and has hastened since 1990s by virtue of accomplishments obtained from information and knowledge-in-depth activities (Commander, Kangasniemi & Winters, 2004). Just like they did in Colonial Period to take workforce to their countries, developed countries are using various pulling factors to take highly educated people of underdeveloped or developing countries to their countries as they need them in many areas such as information and computer technologies (Pazarcık, 2010). The developed nations have strongly promoted the brain drain phenomenon by the use of various incentives comprising the utilization of interim visas for skilled migrants (Commander et al., 2004). The United States of America, for instance, has made up a migration system highlighting the importance of comprising only migrants at least having bachelors’ degree and has maintained that workforce of migrants for filling the jobs requiring less education or training is not accepted (Banas, 2018). Especially the subject of education is the most important pulling factor for obtaining this qualified brain power which result in hesitation for the students to return to their countries. When they decide on non-return, the underdeveloped or developing host countries face brain drain problems which results in the home country to lose their human capital (Pazarcık, 2010). The developed countries (Japan, Germany, the USA, etc.) owe their development to their investments in human capital elements as education. Due to the characteristics of micro and macro level education investments, it is highly significant to calculate the return on education investments in the development process (Tunç, 1998).

When brain drain occurs, all of the expenditure made for these people are transferred to the host country with the possible future-gaining (Atılgan, 1986) such as spreading the information and knowledge in the society and improving the productivity in the economy which deteriorates the growth potential of the host country in the long term. Its result is seen as the reverse technology transfer and thought as a detrimental aspect for the home country while the host country gets high-skilled labor in a cheap way. In this respect, underdeveloped or developing countries are searching for precautions to pull their citizens back (Elveren, 2018).

1.3. The Turkish Case

Being one of the developing countries, since the declaration of the Republic, varying number of students has been sent abroad from Turkey under different Laws and regulations. In the 1930s with the rapid change in science and technology, students started to be sent abroad with the Law numbered 1416. They were expected to bring the scientific developments to Turkey and meet highly qualified workforce. It was observed that some of these students did not return or some of the returnees went back abroad after a while and it was found out that particularly unemployment and economic reasons resulted in this brain drain case (Cansız, 2006). Today, with the same expectations held in 1930s, Turkish students are sent abroad for education via official scholarships named the Fulbright Program, The Chevening Program, The Jean-Monnet Act and Scholarship Program, Erasmus Program and YLSY Program (Erden, 2013). However, these programs’ success to achieve the main goal has always been debatable in terms of brain drain. In a report prepared by Gümüş and Gökbel (2012), the efforts to train academics via these scholarships are analyzed in detail. According to the report, when compared to the developed countries, the enrolment rate in higher education level is very low in Turkey and many universities have been founded around the country with the aim of becoming one of the most developed ten economies in the world. With this step, the shortage in the number of academics become evident and in order to meet this need, scholarship and support activities started for training academics. However, it is reported that out of 3967 students just 2618 returned and started their professions in Turkey between 1987 and 2012. 1173 students quit the program due to various reasons such as health, being unsuccessful, resignation, etc. As Cansız (2006) mentions, in this context, Turkey faces with the danger of missing the opportunity to keep up with scientific innovations abroad.

Particularly YLSY program is the one which has taken attention a lot in terms of brain drain for nearly 10 years (Erden, 2013). Postgraduate students who have the desire to pursue a Master’s or PhD degree from a university abroad apply this scholarship. After the selection process, if the chosen students have language problem, they are supported with language courses before they start their postgraduate education. Besides, the tuition and fees, domestic and international transportation and health expenses, stationary expenses, monthly scholarship payment, exam fees, and other compulsory charges for curriculum related activities are sponsored by the MoNE and CoHE. In return for these opportunities, the students are expected to do compulsory service in a Turkish state university for a period equal to twice the duration of study abroad (Yükseköğretim ve Yurtdışı Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020).

In 2018, İsmet Yılmaz, the Minister of National Education, expressed that 9038 students are sent abroad with the YLSY scholarship between 2006 and 2018 and there were 3850 officially state sponsored students getting education in 49 countries including the U.K., Germany, the U.S.A., Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, India, Iran, Georgia and Russia. In 2017, the quota for the program was decided as 1155 and 824 students out of 10597 applicants for the scholarship were chosen. Besides, he added that the budget for the program was increased from 278 million to 387 million (Yurtdışı Yükseköğretim ve Yurtdışı Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü, 2018).

The students are signing a contract to insure that in the case that they cannot complete their education or do not return, they would pay all of these expenses and legal interest to Turkish MoNE and CoHE in 4 years (Yükseköğretim ve Yurtdışı Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü, 2020). It is seen that it cannot prevent brain drain as there are many students who stay in the host country after they get their degrees and not return to Turkey. So, as Lee (1966) states in his theory, there must be some pulling factors of the host countries and push factors of Turkey in order for the students to take this risky decision. It is expected that this study will contribute to understand the push and pull factors which causes brain drain of YLSY students.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study was conducted adopting the phenomenological design fitting the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research gave the researchers an insight on the lives of people, their experiences, attitudes, perceptions, feelings on the one hand and social movements, cultural norms, and connections between countries on the other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In relation to the aim of this study, to understand the experiences and comprehension of YLSY students on brain drain phenomenon and find out the common push/pull factors affecting their experiences to decide studying and staying abroad, among the qualitative approach designs, phenomenology was employed since it focuses on how people understand and describe the essence of their experiences and focusing on the nature of meaning of these experiences to them (Husserl, 1913). Phenomenology involves identifying the common features of participants who have the same experience on the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) and thus aims at obtaining better comprehension of the participants’ nature of meaning of their daily experiences (Patton, 2002).

2.2. Participants of the Study

Snowball sampling among the purposeful sampling methods was employed for selecting the participants. Creswell (2012) mentions that purposeful sampling in qualitative approach gives way to identify participants in accordance with places and support the researchers to understand their central phenomenon. Besides, Patton (2002) emphasizes that in purposeful sampling, the participants’ knowledge or expertise on the subject is taken into account by the researchers, which allowed the researchers to identify the participants in this study. Adopting snowball sampling enables researchers to reach potential participants who are inaccessible or difficult to find (Singh, 2007). In the scope of this study, the participants were in different countries and reaching them was difficult, thus the study was carried online using snowball sampling and each participant was asked to direct the researchers to another participant. Although each previous participant directed to potential participants, special attention was given to the voluntary participation in the research. Participants basically have two characteristics; to be a YLYS scholar granted by the Turkish Ministry of Education and to have renounced this scholarship in the target country and to settle in this country within the scope of brain drain. The participants were given a pseudonym related to migratory birds to keep the identity information of participants confidential and they were informed about this choice. In this way, they were tried to be enabled to express their ideas and experiences in a more open and sincere way in order to increase the transferability of the data. Demographic information of the participants was as in Table 1.

As seen in the table, 10 participants from different disciplines and different countries were interviewed. Pseudonyms were used and the details regarding their demographic information were not given so as to keep their identities secret. The mean of the participants’ ages was found as 34 and four of them were married and three of them had a child.

Table 1. *Demographics of participants*

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| **Demographic Information** | **Data** |
| Participants | Canary, Accipiter, Swallow, Falcon, Bee-eater, |
| White Stork, Fringilla, Crane Bird, Eagle |
| The mean age of the participants | 34 |
| Marital status | Married: 4 Single: 6 |
| Children | Yes: 3 No: 7 |
| Research area | Health Sciences: 1 |
| Computer Science & Mathemathics: 3 |
| Education: 3 |
| Engineering: 1 |
| Political Sciences: 2 |
| The region supposed to be returned in Turkey | Eastern Anatolia: 1 |
| Blacksea: 6 |
| Central Anatolia: 2 |
| Marmara: 1 |
| The host country they live | The U.S.: 5 |
| The U.K.: 2 |
| Canada: 2 |
| Germany: 1 |
| The mean of year they spent in host countries | 9 years |
| The mean of frequency they visit Turkey | Every year: 7 |
| Biennially: 3 |

The regions they were supposed to return to work were seen as four different regions and Blacksea Region seemed to be the place to return the most. The U.S.A. was the host country for half of the participants. While there were two participants in Canada and the U.K., one participant was from Europe. It was also observed that even if the participants lived abroad for a long time, they visited Turkey once or twice a year.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

In data collection procedure of the study, first of all an application to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) was made and the permission from the IRB at Yıldız Technical University was obtained to conduct this study (IRB Number: E.2102090011) issued on 01.09.2021. Data was gathered via one-to-one online interviews. There were two reasons for doing one-to-one online interviews in the study; the first is that the participants live abroad, and the second is that the data were collected during the pandemic period. Semi-structured interview questions were used to gather data because semi-structured questions allow new questions to be asked during the research while at the same time allowing the researcher to stay within a certain framework (Robson & McCartan, 2016). After reviewing the related literature, possible questions that could be asked in the scope of this research were formed and then the ones thought to be offensive were eliminated. As a result, a semi-structured interview questions were prepared by the researchers. Semi-structured open-ended questions are presented to the participants to make comments on. Researchers are to be careful that the structure and the main concern of the research should be clear to enhance consistency (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this context, before using these interview questions, to provide the consistency, the prepared form was sent to three field experts to be checked in terms of its clarity and applicability. Regarding the experts’ feedback three questions were revised to be made more understandable and one question was added as well.

Besides, before starting the data collection process a consent form and a form explaining the procedure of the interviews in detail were prepared to ask participants to involve in the research, and in the form the scope of the study was explained in detail and they were assured about the data gained from them would be kept confidential and pseudonyms would be used instead of their names. It is stated that the data obtained would only be used for this research and they could give up whenever they wanted. Also, they were asked whether there was any problem for them to be recorded; only voice was recorded when they did not want to be recorded visually. These forms were sent before the participants were interviewed online and to provide sensitivity, they were made feel free about the duration and recording. Interviews took an average of 40-50 minutes. The audio recordings of each participant were transcribed immediately after the interview. Also the field notes were added into these transcriptions and then they were sent to the participants to receive their confirmation. Hence, the consistency of the data was tried to be increased.

2.4. Data Analysis

All the audio-transcriptions confirmed by the participants were analyzed via content analysis which poses the interest in the social sense and experience and puts emphasis on impartial research (Marvasti, 2004). As Patton (2002) explains content analysis gave the researchers opportunity to uncover the hidden meanings and patterns in collected data. To increase the credibility of the study the transcriptions and identified codes, categories and themes were reread. As content analysis necessitates more than just reading the transcripts (Patton, 2002), each of the researchers listened or watched the interviews and took different notes to combine them later for having a common codebook in order to have credibility. To make the participants feel welcome the interviews were made online and totally 10 interviews were made.

**3. Findings**

The content analysis of the transcribed data and observations of the research conducted in accordance with the sub-research questions and four themes were reached as *journey to opportunities, coefficient repellents and incentives, an effort not to lose what is achieved* and *suggestions.*

**3.1. Theme One: Journey to Opportunities**

The theme *journey to opportunities* consists of the participants’ view on how they define and explain the brain drain phenomenon. This theme includes three categories as freedom, requirementandbeing discovered. Freedom category highlights the views of the participants’ feelings related to freedom in social, political and academic sense. For example, the opinions of a participant regarding brain drain is as follows:

Crane Bird: Actually, I think brain does not migrate, people migrate. Brain drain is choosing where we live, being able to think freely in a positive environment without any social pressure or interference in social life. Here, you know, everybody lives their own life, nobody intervenes with anyone. Well, in Turkey it is called "neighborhood pressure" isn’t it? There is not much pressure in the neighborhood here. Here you are free to make your decisions and live the way you want. There are no patterns and it is not odd that people do not have patterns.... People change their places, move to other places. When they move to other places, they establish new human relationships, create new orders, they make new habits. For this reason, the place where you live for 7-8 years is now your home, even though your country is your home ... Social pressure, neighborhood pressure… Especially in terms of politics, I am not saying that I am a political person, do not misunderstand, I see a group of people who are trying to be polarized when I look at Turkey. I am someone who wants to be neither on one side nor the other of that group, but when you are there, you have to choose one side. In particular, you have to choose the side in power. Frankly, I do not want to live in such a place.

Another participant comments as:

Falcon: I think I spend most of my life working and dealing with academic activities, so living abroad means for me to continue my academic activities freely and productively. In other words, the most important aspect of living abroad for me is, productivity and freedom in my academic field and my studies ... In other words, the most important thing for me is the right to continue my academic studies in a free and productive way.

Another category under the first theme is requirement. Accordingly, one of the participants shares his and her views as follows:

"Canary: I think this concept of brain drain is something made up by third world countries. The brain has of course to migrate. When the brain is not given the opportunity, it has to go and work where it finds the opportunity. If you cannot express yourself in a country, if you cannot do science as you want, and there are a lot of stages in science, I am not just talking about personal freedom of thought. There is financial freedom, there are things like freedom in terms of working hours. My academician friends in Turkey give classes for days like primary school teachers...It means freedom to me, to be myself. Being myself both individually and academically and that my voice will be heard.

Another one chose to explain it as:

Fringilla: I can say that brain drain is a movement of people who has a certain potential, skill, knowledge and abilities that the country has raised, I don’t mean students, let me say people because you may not be students anymore… The movement of people that results from looking for a remedy by seeking other ways as a result of not being evaluated in some way and their loss of motivation and thus diverting to other directions.

Another category reached in line with the first theme is being discovered. This category consists of expressions that include the opportunity of being discovered in the host country. One of the participants says:

Accipiter: Brain drain is to reveal the competencies and skills of those who are digested, suppressed, sat back or whose skills have not been discovered for different reasons or for different justifications in their own country… and these people’s desire to stay abroad where they get good, qualified education and their competencies and skills are revealed and as they are valued and nourished in the environment. That is, they don't want to go back to the place where they were not adopted or accepted, I will call it a brain drain.

To sum up, it was observed that the categories reflecting the sense of brain drain are social, political and academic freedom, the requirement they feel to stay abroad and their feeling on being valued and discovered.

**3.2. Theme Two: Coefficient Repellents and Incentives**

The theme reached regarding the pushing and pulling factors of the brain drain is coefficient repellents and incentives. This theme consists of five categories as academic, social, economic, psychological and bureaucratic factors. The academic factors includes some comparisons of the home and host countries and while the home country is associated with negativities , the host countries are in line with positive factors regarding academic autonomy and freedom, academic relations, scientific opportunities and incentives, and meritocracy which serves equal opportunities. One of the participants explains the comparison of academic factors as below:

Accipiter: You are free academically. When you want to study a subject, even if it is political, nobody says why you are working on that. Or when you work, you know that there are no points that will hinder you academically or cause problems in your career. ... For me, being abroad is academic freedom, freedom of publication, freedom to publish, freedom to work. There are serious incentives here in scientific terms. So if you want to study something, people offer you opportunities for it, and you have rights in terms of ethical violation, namely academic ethics. So for example, if one applies you mobbing, you do not need to be silent and as a person who has been exposed to mobbing in Turkey this is one of the most important factors for me in the sense of being abroad... This is my priority because if I came to Turkey will not have this freedom. There is mobbing in Turkey, there are also different versions of it here but there is a different balance of power here. If you are subjected to injustice, if someone is mobbing you, you can call your right and there is a system standing behind you. Everything is independent of positions and people. That's why I like it. This is the main reason why I want to stay in America, I have academic freedom, I know that my rights will be protected, I know that I will get what I deserve if I work… All this together with my knowledge and ethics determined where I stand and where I want to be.

Social factors category is another significant one in the brain drain movement. In terms of pulling and pushing factors related to social factors participants stressed that social life intervention, and lack of opportunity to change social class are the pushing factors from Turkey, while the situation is opposite in the host countries. One of the participants mentions the difference as:

Falcon: In Turkey, we born in environmental factors and in a certain social class. There are some limitations that this social class imposes on us, either directly or indirectly. The limitations of the social class you were born in affect you much more in the country of birth. Here, we are much more likely to be part of a different social class or to change our social class. Because the environmental factors that hold you back are too many; it could be friendships, your family and financial conditions. I feel like the absence of these is unburdening me and making me feel more at ease here. To use an analogy, you know when they throw sandbags from balloons, I feel like I got rid of these sandbags. I feel like I’ve got rid of the social weights that keep me in a certain point.

Another participant agrees and says:

Accipiter: Apart from academic life, there are many sociological factors; here life is your life. People cannot interfere with your life, when you close your door and enter, life is your life. Whatever you're doing outside concerns you. People have no words to say in your life. I love it. For me, that means not being judged as an individual, but being accepted as I am. That is why, who I am what I am and how I am accepted is important to me. In Turkey, I cannot feel it anymore. When I come, I cannot feel it either. Because people tagging you in Turkey. We put everyone in boxes, who you are, your title, your status, where you live, what you have changes people’s opinions about you in Turkey. However, there is no such thing here… That's what pushes me, and the reason why I evolved more and more here over time. Here people always start by appreciating you, even if they criticize you, and at the end they appreciate your good sides, because none of us are perfect, we all have aspects to criticize. The point of view here is that: everyone has a good side and I should appreciate everyone's good side first, what is the side that I criticize, what needs to be corrected, how can I say this without hurting the other person when I say this? This has become a culture, it has become the norm, and when people behave like this and treat each other like that, it actually makes this side a little warmer. My reason for feeling not feeling close to Turkey is that we never know our own faults before blaming others for theirs. Unfortunately, this pushes me from Turkey now.

Economic factors as the third category are generally associated with financial issues and being confident about the future. The participants mention economic factors as below:

Fringilla: In terms of education, there is a lot of emphasis on doing research here; science is very important. For example, I am in the last year of my PhD, and a lot of funds are allocated for these, this is very important. Because doing research is something that requires this, I think. When we do research one day tomorrow, we will gather participants; even participants have to be paid for their participation. We get support here from everywhere at the university level and the state level, this very important thing. Besides we are surrounded with experts in many fields, there are different minds from many parts of the world and we are experiencing the meeting of those minds here. We are in a multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural, and very intelligent environment. So these are very good things, and, I think, a point that is different from Turkey. As I said, we are given importance financially and educationally.

In line with Fringilla’s opinion, Hoopoe expresses the point as:

Hoopoe: Naturally, when I compare the current location we are living abroad now and Istanbul, Turkey or any province of Turkey, I can say that the living conditions here are at a much higher level. There is a less stressful life here in socio-economic terms. So in terms of finding a job or working conditions here is more comfortable than Turkey. While making a decision, you constantly check the alternative cost within yourself. I found a job here because I think the path I chose is more advantageous for me, I work here. I think I am more comfortable in socio-economic dimensions. If I had returned Turkey, I would have had difficulty in finding a job I wanted, working or repayment of the scholarship etc. I was going to be more stressed, so these advantages are available abroad.

For the psychological factors category, the participants discussed about psychological well- being and feeling valuable as pulling factors of the host countries while anxiety and loss of motivation is expressed as pushing factors from Turkey. Canary explains the difference between the home and host country as:

Canary: The academic environment here is a very understanding environment, so they don't try to take advantage of human illnesses, weak spots and so on. At least one of the most important thing I can compare is that point, based on my own experience. We all have weak points and these are used as targets in Turkey. If I am sick here, I am sick, so no one is trying to blame me for this ... I don't even have to get a medical report here.

Bureaucratic factors were found as the last category for coefficient repellents and incentives theme. While Canary talks about the visa convenience as pulling factors of the host countries, White Stork talks about the bureaucratic problems he/she had with Turkey.

Canary: My host country does not want international students with a PhD to go. There is also such a thing in terms of immigration, it is called fast track. I don't know if there is one in America, but there is a fast track thing here, so they don't want the brain drain you say.

White Stork: The YLSY program allows you to start for 4 years, after that, it gives you permission to extend it for another year, then you allow it to extend for another year, you can extend it up to six years. So, unlike Europe, when you do your doctorate in America, you sometimes want to extend the last years of your doctorate. Because they are our most productive years, there are times when you broadcast fully. For example, you bring a project to the end, when you are going to publish a lot of broadcasts in a row. During this period, I asked for a 1-year extension leave, but they gave me half-year leave. It has been 5 years; I asked permission for the 6th year. They gave me a leave of absence for 6 months, I finished my PhD hastily and there is no explanation for this. There is no feedback on why it was allowed 6 months. Then we have a one-year leave to post doctorate, to gain some experience… They did not give post doctorate permission; it is still not clear why they did not. Then, instead of sending me to the university I meant to go, they said, "Come here, start working at the District Directorate of National Education, then we'll make your appointment to the university,". I had serious distrust here, from my point of view. I did not return under these conditions, I said “I will not return”… On the one hand, I have my responsibility, but on the other hand, they have responsibility as well. The problem here is not the law, the main problem here, as far as I observe, is that the Ministry of Education does this. So this is a subject of higher education, for example, there is no one in that program that can evaluate whether my desire to extend my doctorate is a valid request.

As can be seen, the second theme reached is, in fact, related to Lee’s pulling and pushing factors theory. Among the categories, the most important one seems to be the academic ones while the social factors are also seem as much significant as them. All these factors are opposite in home and host countries, that is, the pulling factors of home countries are found to be the pushing ones from Turkey.

**3.3. Theme Three: An Effort not to Lose What is Achieved**

The theme *an effort not to lose what is achieved* reflects the opinions of the participants relevant to the categories named psychological well-being, professionalism and productivity. Psychological well-being is described by Eagle as:

Eagle: Living abroad means being yourself for me. In other words, without any pressure, limitation or stigma, you can be yourself. The convenience of reaching your desired goal without any limit, as far as your intelligence allows, all these… There are many advantages for me in academic terms. Because following developments closely, unfortunately, not an advantage that can be obtained very easily in Turkey. Apart from that, let's assume that we also consider the financial possibilities, you have the opportunity to get many incentives here and these incentives are given not by considering which view you hold, which side you are on, but by considering the effort you have given. It makes you feel that your efforts are fully rewarded and your satisfaction is very high in terms of academic self-improvement and support. You can feel very very happy in social and artistic terms; In other words, it is not possible to have the same opportunities in every city in our country. You can come together with people from all over the world, you can have different possibilities and you are presented with many opportunities in terms of personal development. This place makes me feel free for myself, successful and cared for. I think these are the feelings that really need to be taken into account, and unfortunately, the opposite is the case in our country. Here you feel more comfortable, more productive, more useful. ... Your determination, energy, all your efforts are really valuable here. In other words, there is a system where labor is put at the center without being subjected to any class distinction and this system makes you feel valuable and motivated in terms of production. Everything really depends on the rules; everything is evaluated within your effort.

Swallow, on the other hand underlines professionalism as:

Swallow: Student relations are very different here, of course. Now I have classes, the relationships we established with students is very different than in Turkey, much more professional. It seems as if it reduces the extra pressure on you. So there was so much student pressure on me. That is not so much of the issue here; the student dynamics are very different. For example, we had to deal with note requests on social media, There isn't much of that happening here.... First of all, there is no drudgery here, I can say that. I mean, of course, there is a power relation here too. Head of department asks, for example, you can say "I do not want to do it, I am busy, I have another job that day". This will not create any personal problem between you; maybe he will not ask anything extra again… That was a problem in Turkey and it was getting personal… There is no drudgery, if they ask you to read a paper, they offer extra fee for it except from your salary. Also there is no last-minute works and it makes you mentally comfortable in that respect. For example, I was asked to give a lesson at the end of January, I was told about a month ago and of course you can say no again. The library opportunities are much more, the research opportunities are much more. For example, now we have difficulties in going to the library due to the pandemic, some books are provided or the chapter I want is sent, scanned etc. I think that as long as there is an environment where universities are not autonomous, there is no participation, scientific thinking and academic freedoms are not protected, nobody would want to return. Because you really feel that difference, when you spend a while here, frankly....

Briefly, the participants are feeling psychologically well and more productive abroad as there are more opportunities for self-development. They also claim that the working environment and relationships are more professional there and they feel more valuable in this regard.

**3.4. Theme Four: Suggestions**

*Suggestions* is the theme that was achieved from the perspective of the participants, they suggested some recommendations regarding the YLSY program, some academic suggestions and some suggestions related to economic conditions. Hoopoe focuses on the suggestions regarding compensation, consulting services and long bureaucratic procedures, flexibility for the place to return.

Hoopoe: Compensation has been a very serious problem, I got depressed. 1 (Turkish Lira) TL was around $ 2.5 when I arrived. The money paid for me is TL, but they convert the money into dollars and ask us back in foreign currency. We pay at today's exchange rate, but an interest is also charged. This needs a solution. In addition, for the students who went abroad for academic purposes and not returned and the ones who think returning back and starting their compulsory service, there should be a better consulting service and follow up activities. When you try to communicate, the people you reach are either really unaware of the field or you have to explain the whole process from beginning to end with new people each time, trying to explain your problem by making an effort because the person has changed, but after a while you give up anyway. While trying to complete the infrastructure of such a project, people who have a vision of abroad in this field, who have a command of this vision and who have the same experiences should be interested in us. In other words, even if they have been abroad before, you cannot explain your problem to a person who has not been in this context or who has linguistic problems related to legislation. He wants to understand you; he tries, but cannot understand. All these are always sources of problems. Not only language problems, but people who have the same experiences, people who go abroad and go through these processes, who look at life in the same direction with you or who have common experiences should have a voice and authority in the coordination of this program. Unfortunately, all of our academician candidates who went abroad seem like they are left alone with their fate right now. Also, the issues to be determined as a rule by the policy practitioners need to be revised again. Diploma Equivalences take a long time, the process of finding a job and appointment after returning is long. Frankly, I believe that after returning, the job opportunities should be more flexible and the academicians' minds should be more relaxed on this process. After your return, you have to pay back the scholarship they have given you with a service in a place they have specified as a service. In this dimension, I think the quotas and conditions should be expanded and stretched more. Think of it this way, you are coming back and you want to do this service with your family, but they can direct you to where they need. The duration of compulsory service is really long and you have to be away from your beloved ones for a really long time. You have a contradiction within yourself there, too. I wanted to say that. So, I think you need to be given flexibility for the field you want to work and start in after you come back.

On the other hand Falcon, stresses the suggestions regarding evaluation of ability/knowledge or skill and communication between the student and the university to be returned for the compulsory service.

Falcon: I think the most important factor is feeling valuable, deployed in a more planned way when they return, and evaluated in the field they work in. Most importantly, I think, people need clarity. Most people are unaware of what they are doing when applying for a scholarship, when they get a scholarship, when they are studying with a scholarship, with a scholarship while studying here, for a scholarship while they are preparing there. So there is very little information available. There is an incredible lack of information. So in a clearer way they should inform us as "Look, this is your scholarship conditions, these are the conditions you will work in the place you will return to", maybe even people, I mean, a training can be provided before you go ... maybe, a visit to the place where you will be working before you go, or the infrastructure and preparations for the department you work in... “Look, you will work in this area. These are our other professors working in this field. ”… For example, constant communication with them would be a very important factor for me. For example, if I knew who I would work with, where I would work, and in which field I should work when I arrived, it would be very different. Since my communication with the country is none of these, I worked in the field I wanted and specialized in. It has no equivalence in Turkey… So the communication was pretty bad. I mean, I never talked to anyone during the entire scholarship process, not even once ... communication with counseling is very, very poor.

The participants gave some academic suggestions as well, White Stork shares his or her ideas as follows:

White Stork: Freedom is very important to me in the academy. So what will I do there, how much will I publish, how do I get projects, what position will I be, my lab, my students, the lectures I will give, the responsibilities that the university will give me, other responsibilities… I mean, will I be a person carrying a drudgery or will there be a fair system that really pays off for working academically, all of these are very important. I think it is a bit of a problem to manage universities in general. People want to return, the issue is not encouragement here, the issue here is that people need to believe that there is an environment where they will be beneficial to their countries and contribute to their countries when they return. Really, freedom is a very important thing at this point. When you come back, will you necessarily be someone's man, so do you have such an obligation? … Will you act in a certain freedom? Will your academic studies define you, determine the future of your career? Or will your personal or political relationships determine this? These differences keep people here. I believe in this…

Fringilla comments as:

Fringilla: I think we are here to learn more about how to do research, how to do the right research, how to ask the right question, by which method you can answer the right question in the best way, rather than teaching. With these skills I learned, I want to come there and raise a doctorate student and a master student and produce something together. I don't want just teaching. Yes, I will also teach, but I think even three lessons are too much; we also have talent in other areas. I am trying to say it. I want to study in a balanced way, research and teaching based. We really attach great importance to teaching. Ok, it is very sacred, very beautiful thing, but we cannot do research; we also need to do research as a country. We cannot produce a study, we cannot produce anything, I do not know, they cannot make an invention in the country. So research needs to be done, we need to talk with the data now. I think they should achieve that balance. They need to balance teaching-research. Also, we hear about some of the problems faced by the professors, associate professors, lecturers, faculty members in this academy department such as staff problems, bureaucracy problems. These need to be connected to a system and arranged with guidance. Besides there is lack of meritocracy in academic appointment issues. I have not experienced these things myself, but we hear that these are very discouraging things.

The last category for suggestions is related to economic conditions in Turkey. Bee-eater and Hoopoe suggest their ideas respectively as follows:

Bee-eater: It is indisputable that I prefer to focus on the difference between the home and host countries, financial opportunities are unquestionable. We can think of this as both a direct salary and professional financial opportunities which are also important. Because if you really give importance to what you’re doing, it is not easy to find research funds in Turkey compared to European countries. Third are other benefits which can still be associated with the salary or income and others resulting from the welfare state. Therefore, when I make a profit-loss analysis, I need to take into account the things beyond the salary, which includes comparing Turkey with Western European countries. So, from the taxes you pay to the education your child benefits from are different. The services are available through private health insurance in Turkey, but here you can get with normal legal premium pay. When you put things like these on top of each other, there is a serious financial difference.

Hoopoe: When making a decision, you definitely have to consider the alternative cost of it to you. First of all, in the sense of taking a step forward, when you turn to a goal you want to take, you should not lose the existing phenomenon and not lose the situation you already have. First of all, my opportunities and comfort must continue there. I should be able to find a job under the same economic conditions. Because I think the economy is shaping the basic facts of social life. Since many problems arise in today's age without the financial opportunities, I would like to have a job that can work under the same conditions as the main reason. "

When the suggestions for economic conditions were revised, it was realized that participants generally compared the high living standards in host countries and financial problems they think they would have had in Turkey if they had returned.

**4. Conclusion & Discussion**

In this study, as Lee (1966) proposes, both pushing factors from the home country and pulling factors from the host countries are detected. The analysis of the findings regarding the definition of brain drain from the perspective of the participants and aforementioned factors that influence their decision regarding brain drain makes the researchers reach four different themes as *journey to opportunities, co-efficient repellents and incentives, an effort not to lose what is achieved* and *suggestions* of participants. It is observed that almost all the pushing and pulling factors are just the opposites of each other in home and host countries; that is participants find the opportunities they need in host countries, which they cannot find in their home country and these are the reasons why they do not return to Turkey.

As Lee (1966) presupposes, distance from the home country and longing for the people, nature or culture of it are detected as difficulties for the participants. All of them are longing for their family or friends in Turkey and highlight the importance of sincerity they had in Turkey which seems to be very shallow in the host countries. The other things they miss mostly are identified as food, culture, using mother tongue, hometown, nature and weather in Turkey. In line with Lee’s theory, it was determined that economic and social factors as well as opportunities abroad and familial situations affect their decision to stay in host countries. In addition, the pushing or pulling factors that Atılgan (1986) has found show resemblance to the findings of this study in some ways. He also mentions that the pushing factors are economic, academic, social and political instability while the pulling ones are economic, academic and familial situations in the host country. As Atılgan (1986) claims, academic reasons, restrictive social bonds and the political structure in the home country repel the participants while economic opportunities provided by the host countries in addition to the academic and social free environment convinced them to take this decision. In this study these factors are some of the themes found and the social factor is found to be as important as academic ones. Participants underline the importance of being socially free without any boundaries or prejudice in their decision to stay. They indicate that even some of their families who show some reaction to their decision now. Another study carried out by Rüzgar (2020) investigated the decision of Turkish students, who are continuing their education in a state university in the Midwest region of the United States or who have recently graduated, to return or not to return to Turkey after their education, and what kind of mindset they have while making this decision. His findings correspond to the findings as he found out that the participants who decided not to return were affected by the reasons for having a better economic power, living in a more comfortable political atmosphere, and pursuing a career in a more professional working environment. The participants of his study emphasized the importance of developing economic opportunities and improving the political system to advance democracy.

When the findings on how the participants make sense of brain drain are examined, it was found that this interpretation is defined as a *journey to opportunities* and generally related to categories of freedom, requirement and being discovered. Participants note that they do not feel any social pressure or interference and they are politically free in host countries whereas they feel they are polarized in Turkey. They underline that brain drain is freedom in every sense as academic productivity is much higher and academic freedom is a great advantage in host countries. Participants also claim that brain drain occurs due to requirement and state that the lack of personal and academic opportunities or their being very limited in the home country and not being able to work freely in academic sense creates a necessity. Brain drain, thus, means requirement for them because of these reasons. In addition, the participants who define brain drain as being discovered claim that brain drain means that they are valued, discovered and being heard. As El Saghir et al. (2020) underlines talented and highly educated individuals may decide to stay abroad in order to improve their knowledge and to get more opportunities.

While they state the feeling that their work is underrated in their own countries, they actually determine the pushing and pulling factors for the second theme: *coefficient repellents and incentives.* The categories of these factors are academic, social, economic, psychological and bureaucratic factors. The negativities mentioned about home country are given in comparison to the host countries; in other words, it is determined that those who push the participants from the home country also pull them to the host ones. All participants state that academic freedom and scientific opportunities, which are also mentioned in the first theme, are also important for the second theme. At the same time, as a result of the comparison of home and host countries with regard to meritocracy, the participants underline that there are mobbing and lack of meritocracy in Turkey and these have a great influence on the participants’ decision to stay abroad. Although academic factors are at the forefront, social factors are found to be at least as important as them for the participants. They state that they are much more socially comfortable abroad and are not categorized according to familial, financial and environmental factors. This actually shows how much social pressure they had in Turkey. From the financial perspective, they are afraid to lose the academic and financial incentives they obtained in the host countries if they return to Turkey as there are limited financial incentives for their academic studies or personal development. Students are given incentives or scholarships in terms of high educational standards or scientific opportunities as Kattel and Saptoka (2018) mentions. This situation also means that developed countries promote the migration of highly educated people to their country (Banas, 2018) and use incentives as Commender et al. (2004) point out. They stress that they see their future safe there and thanks to all these pulling factors, they feel psychologically well. They claim that unplanned last minute work, unsympathetic academic environment, social pressure, lack of meritocracy, and too much academic burden in Turkey affect their psychology in a bad way, and that these negativities do not exist in host countries. Lastly, it is realized that some host countries provide bureaucratic facilities such as applying convenience in visa and residence permits and this is also one of the pulling factors affecting participants. On the other hand, bureaucratic problems towards YLSY program are observed as another pushing factor. It is stated that the responsible institution of this program, which is related to higher education, is the MoNE not CoHE, and this has a major role in the prolongation or disruption of bureaucratic procedures. Among these problems, they state that there are some arbitrary practices such as the program practitioners’ refusal to give an extension without any explanation and this is also an indication that the MoNE is not supposed to be related to this issue.

It is understood that all participants have decided to migrate in order not to lose the advantages they gained in host countries. They are equipped with various opportunities and are feeling happy in that socially and artistically positive environment. They fear that they cannot find such an environment for personal development in Turkey if they return. Thus, the dominance of psychological well-being, professionalism and productivity categories under the theme *an effort not to lose what is achieved* draws attention. Participants, feeling well in every sense in host countries, state that they feel good psychologically, can be productive professionally, are equipped with incentives for personal and scientific development, and they feel valued and cared for and do not want to leave this environment. They express their worry that if they return, this psychological well-being would end as a result of losing every chance they have in host countries. In short, as Lee (1966) proposes for the brain drain phenomenon there are pushing and pulling factors as academic, social, economic, psychological and bureaucratic as well as some individual factors as spouses and children’s education. While academic factors are seen the most important, social factors are as much important as academic ones. Economic factors are generally related to compensation issues and affect their social life and psychology as well. They long for people and nature of the home country mostly even if they seem happy in their host country. Bureaucratic factors are generally related to visa and residence permit in terms of pulling factors whereas it is related to YLSY program problems as pushing factors.

The last theme, *suggestions,* contains participants’ recommendations germane to the YLSY program, the academic and economic structure of the country. When the suggestions regarding the program are examined, compensation application and the arrangement of the place to return override. The compensation being demanded is too high for them to pay if they return to Turkey but do not want to go to the place chosen. As they could not pay this debt working in Turkey in five years with its interest rate in some respect they have to work abroad and pay this money. Even abroad they feel the stress of paying this debt and all of them feel that the interest rate being paid is not fair as they paid or are paying their debt via foreign currency. It is seen that the economic apprehension they feel affects their social life there as well; when they have economic worries, they cannot spend much money to socialize and this situation creates a sense of loneliness. On the other hand, this economic pressure is not only because of compensation. Three of the participants think that it is hard to find a job and there is no insurance that they will continue to work in that job. However, this would also be the same for Turkey if they returned and did not want to work for the university they were sent to work. In addition, the participants state that the compensation is too high compared to similar programs in other countries. They argue that there is no financial loss since the debt is paid in foreign currency and this could be seen as a loan instead of a scholarship. Since this payment does not cause any loss, they also suggest that interest be abandoned and the compensation repayment period be extended. From another point, the participants highlight that the length of this compulsory service is too long and working in a city, which they have not even seen before, for a long time is not fair. They have to work twice as long as they have studied there. Considering the long time they have spent abroad, it is normal for them to feel the sense of belonging to the new cultures of the host countries and getting used to living there and the dynamics of the area. They create some social, familial or academic bonds that they cannot cut out easily. Two participants are married to a spouse from their host countries and they feel it as a chance to adapt to the new culture and social structure easily. If they decide to return, they have to also think about the job opportunities of their spouses or education of their children. They suggest compulsory service should be applied equal to the time they spend abroad with flexibility regarding the places to return to. They offer to be free to choose the place they return to or to have the chance to stay abroad while working in academic projects in Turkey or teach classes via distant education. With this flexibility, they think, they can spend this time with their families and thus they can feel better psychologically. On the other hand, another suggested issue is a training program that students can attend before they go abroad, and their being encouraged to cooperate with the university they would work. This seems as a negative side being criticized since there seems to be limited training or introduction process. It is observed that the participants feel as if thrown to another country as they do not have any consulting service or follow up process. They complain that they have tried to learn every procedure from each other. As the staff in MoNE change often, they state, there seem to be no interaction between the old and new personnel. The students complain about retelling every procedures and problems repetitively. Thus, they suggest that the follow-up and counselling services regarding the program should be improved, the competence of the personnel in MoNE should be increased and these personnel should not be changed frequently. Some participants even think that CoHE should be in charge for this program instead of MoNE as this is an higher education issue. They think unplanned or arbitrary implementations during the process is associated with MoNE’s being ignorant about the process or the students’ problems and being irrelevant to higher education issues. Because of this, they say, as well as the time spent for the diploma equivalence process, the appointment procedure takes a long time. Getting the equivalence of the diplomas last long and during this process they have to wait for appointment without a salary and sometimes they are not sent to the university they are supposed to go. They mention that they are even claimed to MoNE offices for some time until their appointment procedures are completed which requires even copying papers in the office. This seems to be unsuitable position for these highly educated people and seen as an insult because, after all these efforts and capital spent for them, their knowledge or skills are not used. This creates a kind of distrust to the program and the participants recommend that there should be some arrangement for this process and this would help them feel cared for or valued.

When academic factors were examined in detail it is seen that for all of the participants this is the most important theme for deciding to stay in host countries. As stated before, equally distributed scientific opportunities or incentives seem to be a highly important reason for them to stay there and they claim that instead of this kind of positive relationships or incentives; there is mobbing, lack of meritocracy, limited scientific opportunities and no academic autonomy in Turkey. Considering all of these, the participants recommend necessary arrangements to create an environment of academic freedom and freedom of thought, and establish a system that would evaluate the research skills they have gained abroad instead of giving drudgery or too many classes to teach when they return. They offer a research-teaching balanced or research based system in which they can use their knowledge and skills. They suggest raising new masters or doctoral students and a system in which they will feel valuable. Some of the participants also suggest that a completely separate research center be established and that they be employed there. The suggestions go on with an increase in the number of research funds and they want financially equivalent conditions as they have abroad.

To conclude, the results obtained from this study reveal that there should be some suggestions for the policy makers, academics and new YLSY students. Policy makers, especially, should evaluate the situation from the perspective of these participants and take necessary measures and make arrangements as listed below:

1. Academic autonomy should be provided and lack of meritocracy or mobbing should be eliminated in the academic environment.
2. The incentives or opportunities to do research should be better as it is abroad.
3. The knowledge or the skills that the students acquired abroad should be used properly; these students’ academic progress should be followed during the process and the necessary consulting should be given.
4. There should be a training before they go abroad and the cooperation between the students and the university staff they will work with when they return should be provided. Also the students should be in touch with these colleagues and do some projects together during the process which may create a sense of belonging to the university they will return to.
5. The length of compulsory service or compensation conditions should be improved and maybe some flexibility should be offered as alternatives.
6. Bureaucratic issues such as the appointment procedures and diploma equivalence procedures should be simplified or at least the students should be informed about the procedures in detail. The consultancy procedures should be improved.
7. The MoNE staff should be chosen meticulously and they should be competent in foreign language and these people should not be changed often.
8. For further research the situation can be studied from the perspective of returned students or the students who failed to complete the program and demanded to pay the compensation. Another option can be dealing with this issue from the perspective of MoNE.
9. YLSY candidates should consider the positive and negative sides of the program in detail and they should get in touch with the former scholarship students.

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